



Committee on Transportation

Public Hearing:

March 9, 2022

HB No. 5366 to legalize Bioptic Driving

Good afternoon. I would like to thank Chairman Roland Lemar and Chairman Will Haskell as well as the members of the transportation committee for having me here today.

My name is Raechaell Corbett and I am the Supervisor of the Driver Assessment Program at Easterseals of Greater Waterbury. I am a Certified Driving Rehab Specialist and I have my Commercial Driving Instructors license. I have been an Occupational therapist for 16 years and I also provide low vision rehab services. I assess people on a regular basis with low vision and/or losses of vision due to a stroke to see if they are safe to operate a motor vehicle.

I am here to speak on behalf of individuals in favor of driving with bioptic lenses. Bioptic driving is currently **legal throughout most of the United States** including many parts of the Northeast (MA, RI, NY, and NJ). Pennsylvania recently legalized driving with bioptics in 2021. Bioptic lenses are utilized for individuals that have a central vision loss to be able to utilize their central vision to read road signs, see traffic lights, read street signs, and to view events far down the road. The bioptic lenses are prescribed by a specialized eye doctor who is able to place telescopes on the individual's lenses to optimize their available vision.

As a provider of low vision rehab, I have worked with many individuals with central vision loss to teach them how to use their peripheral vision functionally in everyday daily activities with the use of compensatory strategies and low vision aids as needed.

If an individual has cognitive abilities that are within functional limits as well as physical abilities that would allow them to safely operate a motor vehicle, then they would most likely have the ability to be able to train behind the wheel in the use of bioptic lenses while driving.

Although bioptic driving is legal in most states, each state has its own guidelines for acuity and peripheral vision as well as what training is required to be able to drive with bioptic lenses.

Therefore, if bioptic driving was legal in CT, it would be imperative that anyone considered a candidate for this be evaluated by a Certified Driving Rehab Specialist to ensure that the individual has the skills required to be able to safely operate a motor vehicle. It would also be imperative that specific guidelines be put in place for behind the wheel training as far as who can provide this training and the number of hours required to road test.

For many of us, the ability to drive is equivalent to our independence. Driving also provides us with the ability to expand upon opportunities outside of the towns/cities we live in. If bioptic driving were legalized, it would provide currently licensed drivers with a loss of vision as well as adolescents with an eye disease affecting their central vision the opportunity to remain and/or become as independent as possible.

Thank you for your time,

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Occupational Therapist

Certified Driver Rehab Specialist

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